

Appl. No.: 09/708,898
Reply to Office Action of 12-22-2005

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-64. (canceled)

65. (New) An apparatus for controlling a plurality of multipoint control units (MCUs), comprising:

- a first application program interface (API) adapted to allow an operator to communicate with the apparatus using a web browser;
- a second API adapted to allow the apparatus to communicate with a plurality of MCUs; and
- a database adapted to store capability factors for the plurality of MCUs;

the apparatus adapted to:

- receive and store information input by the operator using the first API concerning the capability factors for the plurality of MCUs;
- evaluate capability factors of at least two multimedia terminals;
- compare the capability factors of the at least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the MCUs; and
- responsive to the comparing of capability factors, direct a communicative interconnection using the second API between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least two of the plurality of MCUs.

66. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the capability factors include identification factors, matching factors, and routing factors.

67. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the identification factors include information relating to identity, needs, requirements, and participation authority of the plurality of multimedia terminals.

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66. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the matching factors include information relating to the capacity and technological orientation of each of the plurality of multipoint control units.
67. (New) The method of claim 66, wherein the routing factors include information relating to the most expeditious route for effecting the communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals and the multipoint control units.
68. (New) The method of claim 65, wherein the capability factors for the plurality of MCUs is entered by the operator using the web browser.
69. (New) A method for multimedia communication, comprising:
communicatively interconnecting a plurality of multipoint control units (MCUs) to a central controller capable of scheduling and hosting a video conference and allocating conferences on the MCUs such that the number of conferences that can be scheduled on a conference schedule is optimized; the central controller comprising a first application program interface (API) adapted to allow an operator to communicate with the apparatus using a web browser and a second API adapted to allow the apparatus to communicate with a plurality of MCUs; identifying capability factors for each of a plurality of multimedia terminals and each of the plurality of MCUs;
responsive to a command to initiate a multimedia communication between at least two of the plurality of multimedia terminals, evaluating the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals;
comparing the capability factors for each of the at least two multimedia terminals to the capability factors of the multipoint control units communicatively interconnected to the central controller to determine a preferred interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals;

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responsive to the comparing of capability factors, the central controller directing a communicative interconnection between the at least two multimedia terminals via at least one of the plurality of multipoint control units; and controlling multipoint control unit participant slots with the central controller, wherein the central controller controls the MCUs participant slots as if it were an additional MCU.

70. (currently amended) The method of claim 69, wherein the conference schedule is optimized by combining conferences on a MCU so as to maximize the number of participants on the MCU.
71. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the MCU participant slots are participant slots remaining after the MCU is optimally scheduled.
72. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when the start time for a conference arrives.
73. (previously presented) The method of claim 69, wherein the command to initiate a multimedia communication is issued when a participant requests an impromptu multimedia communication.